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The Fiftieth Birth-Day of Agassiz.

MAY 28, 1857.

[The following lines (as one will hardly need to be told) are
by LONGFELLOW, and were read among friends at a birth-day
dinner, which they will long keep in fresh remembrance.]

It was fifty years ago

In the pleasant month of May,
In the beautiful Pays de Vaud,
A child in its cradle lay.

And Nature, the old nurse, took
The child upon her knee,
Saying: "Here is a story-book
Thy Father has written for thee.

"Come, wander with me," she said,
"Into regions yet untrod;
And read what is still unread
In the manuscripts of God."

And he wandered away and away,
With Nature, the dear old nurse,
Who sang to him night and day
The rhymes of the universe.

And whenever the way seemed long
Or his heart began to fail,
She would sing a more wonderful song,
Or tell a more marvellous tale.

So she keeps him still a child,
And will not let him go,
Though at times his heart beats wild
For the beautiful Pays de Vaud;

Though at times he hears in his dreams
The Ranz des Vaches of old,
And the rush of mountain streams
From glaciers clear and cold;

And the mother at home says "Hark!
For his voice I listen and yearn;
It is growing late and dark,
And my boy does not return!"

[To this we may add one of the more impromptu inspirations
of the hour, by JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.]

A health to him who reached to-day
Life's height of water-shedding,
Where Hope and Memory kiss and say:
Let's keep our golden wedding;
To him whose glow the heart could reach
Of glaciers that he studied,
Who learned whatever fish could teach,
Except to be cold-blooded!

To him, who, if our earth were lost,
And Nature wanted counsel,
Could make it over at less cost
From ridgepole down to groun' sill;
Could call the Dodo back to youth,
Could call Ornithorhynchus,
Nay, were we gone, from just a tooth
Could good as new re-think us!

To him who every egg has scanned,
From Roe to flea included,
Save those which savants find so grand
In nests where mares have brooded!
To him, who gives us each full leave
(His pedigree amended)
To choose a private Adam and Eve
From whom to be descended!

But stay—for chance-come thoughts are best—
I meant the health to proffer
Of him, our friend there and our guest,
And yet not that I offer:—
No, rather drink this toast with me,
Worth any common dozen:
Here's Adam and Eve Agassiz,
To whom we owe our cousin!

Sketch of the Life of Handel.

From An Account of the Handel Commemoration in
Westminster Abbey, in 1784.

BY CHARLES BURNES, MUS. DOC., F. R. S.

The "Memoirs of the Life of HANDEL," published in 1760, the year after his decease, though written with zeal and candor, are neither sufficiently ample nor accurate to enable us to ascertain with precision the places of his residence, dates of his productions, or events of his early years, previous to his first arrival in England, in 1710, at the age of twenty-six.

It is however generally agreed, that the great musician, George Frederick Handel, was born at Halle, in the Duchy of Magdebourg, and Circle of Lower Saxony, the 24th of February, 1684; that his father was an eminent surgeon and physician of the same place, and upwards of sixty years of age when this son, the issue of a second marriage, was born; and that, in his early childhood, he discovered such a passion for music as could not be subdued by the commands of his father, who intended him for the profession of the law.

He had made a considerable progress in this art, by stealth, before he was allowed a master; but at seven years old, his father finding it impossible to fix his attention to anything but music, for which he seemed to have been endowed by nature with very uncommon propensities and faculties, he placed him under Zachau, organist

of the cathedral church of Halle; a man of considerable abilities in his profession, and proud of his pupil. By the time he was nine years old, our young musician was not only able to officiate on the organ for his master, but began to study composition; and at this early period of his life he is said to have composed a Service, or, as it is called in Germany, a *spiritual Cantata*, every week, for voices and instruments, during three years successively. The late Mr. Weideman was in possession of a set of Sonatas, in three parts, which Handel composed when he was only ten years old.*

He seems to have continued to study under his first master, Zachau, in his native city, till the year 1698; when, being arrived at the age of fourteen, he was carried to Berlin, where operas were in a very flourishing state, at the court of the Elector of Brandenburg, afterwards King of Prussia, who had then in his service not only many singers of eminence from Italy, but Bononcini and Attilio, to compose. Handel is said to have distinguished himself in this city as a wonderful performer, for his early years, and to have given birth to such expectations of his future greatness, that his Electoral Highness offered to take him into his service, and send him to Italy, for the completion of his musical studies; but his father declining this honor, from a spirit of independence, it was determined that he should return to Halle, where he must have continued a considerable time; though we are told that his father's death happening soon after his return from Berlin, Handel, not being able to support the expense of a journey to Italy, whither he was ambitious of going, removed to Hamburg, in order, by his musical talents, to procure a subsistence: this city, next to Berlin, being then the most renowned for its operas. We lose sight, however, in all the accounts of his life hitherto published, both of our young musician and his improvements from the time of his quitting Berlin, till his arrival at Hamburg, a period of five years; for, according to his rival, Mattheson, he did not visit that city till the year 1703, at the age of nineteen.

Yet the celebrated Telemann, one of the greatest German musicians of his time, in a well written account of his own life and works, drawn up by himself at the request of Mattheson, in the year 1740, furnishes two or three incidents concerning Handel, which intervened between the time of his quitting Berlin and arrival at Hamburg, that will help to throw a little light on this dark period of his history.

Telemann, born at Magdebourg 1681, like Handel, discovered an early passion for music, and, while he was at school, had, like him, made a great progress in the art, contrary to the incli-

* The Earl of Marchmont, in his travels through Germany, when Lord Polwarth, picked them up as great curiosities, and gave them to Mr. Weideman, of whom he took lessons on the German flute. A friend, who favored me with this anecdote, procured a copy of these juvenile productions, which are now in his Majesty's collection, and which Weideman shewed to Handel; who seemed to look at them with much pleasure, and laughing, said: "I used to write like the D—in those days, but chiefly for the hautbois, which was my favorite instrument." This, and the having such an exquisite performer to write for, as San Martini, accounts for the frequent opportunities which Handel took of composing for that instrument, in the early part of his life.

nation of his friends; but though he played on almost every kind of instrument, and had attempted to compose an opera at twelve years old, yet, in obedience to his mother's positive commands, on whom, as his father was dead, he was solely dependent, at about the age of twenty he solemnly renounced his musical pursuits, though with the greatest reluctance, and set out for Leipsic, in order to study the law in that university. In the way thither, however, he stopt at Halle, where, says Telemann, "from my acquaintance with Handel, who was *already famous*, I again sucked in so much of the poison of music as nearly overset all my resolutions."

Handel was now but sixteen years of age; and as Telemann, in his account of himself and his studies, soon mentions our juvenile musician again, I shall proceed a little further in his narrative.

"However," continues Telemann, "after quitting Handel, I persevered in the plan prescribed by my mother, and went to Leipsic to pursue my studies; but, unfortunately, was lodged in a house where I perpetually heard music of all kinds, which, though much worse than my own, again led me into temptation. And a fellow-student finding among my papers a psalm which I had set to music, and which, in sacrificing all my other illicit attempts at composition, had chanced to escape oblivion, he begged it of me, and had it performed at St. Thomas's Church, where it was so much approved, that the burgo-master desired I should compose something of this kind every fortnight; for this I was amply rewarded, and had hopes, likewise, given me, of future advantages of much greater importance. At this time I happened to be reminded of the solemn promise I had made my mother, for whom I had a great reverence, of utterly abandoning all thoughts of music, by receiving from her a draught for my subsistence: which, however, I returned; and, after mentioning the profitable and promising state of my affairs, earnestly intreated her to relax a little in the rigor of her injunctions, concerning the study of music. Her blessings on my new labors, followed; and now I was half a musician again.

"Soon after I was appointed director of the opera, for which I composed many dramas, not only for Leipsic, where I established the College of Music which still subsists, but for Sorau, Frankfort, and the Court of Weissenfels. The organ of the new church was then just built, of which I was appointed organist and director of the music. This organ, however, I only played at the consecration, or opening, and afterwards resigned it, as a bone of contention for young musical students to quarrel and scramble for. At this time the pen of the excellent Kuhnau served me for a model in fugue and counterpoint; but in fashioning subjects of melody, Handel and I were continually exercising our fancy, and reciprocally communicating our thoughts, both by letter and conversation, in the frequent visits we made to each other."

According to Telemann's dates, all this must have happened between the year 1701 and 1703, when Handel, quitting Halle, arrived at Hamburg, a place too distant from Leipsic for frequent visits between these young musicians to have been practicable.†

Handel having passed his youth on the continent, and chiefly in Germany, the incidents of that part of his life must have been better known by his cotemporary countrymen than by an inhabitant of England, who, at the distance of fifty years from the arrival of this great musician among us, depended on tradition for facts.

John Mattheson, an able musician and voluminous writer on the subject of music, who resided at Hamburg during the whole time that Handel remained in that city, has many particulars dispersed through his writings, which merit attention. For though he sometimes appears as a friend, companion, and admirer of Handel's genius and abilities, and at others assumes the critic, discovering manifest signs of rivalry, envy

and discontent, at his superior success; yet, Mattheson was never so abandoned a writer as to invent or disguise facts, which he knew the whole city of Hamburg, and even Handel himself, who was living till within five years of this author's death, could confute.

Mattheson, born at Hamburg 1681, had a liberal education, and became a considerable personage in that city; where, in the younger part of his life, he figured in the triple capacity of composer, opera-singer, and harpsichord-player: and afterwards, though he quitted the stage upon being appointed secretary to Sir Cyril Wych, the English resident, yet he continued to study, practice, and write on musical subjects, till the time of his death.

He discovered as early a propensity to music as Telemann or Handel: having been able at nine years old to sing his own compositions to the organ, in one of the Hamburg Churches; and, at eighteen, he set an opera called the *Pleiades*, for the theatre in that city, in which he sung the principal part himself.

Indeed, Mattheson's early connexion and intercourse there with Handel, before his name as a great musician had penetrated into other parts of Europe, were such, that it is hopeless now to seek for better information than his writings furnish, concerning so interesting a period.

Mattheson was a vain and pompous man, whose first wish in all his writings was to impress the reader with due reverence for his own abilities and importance. It was his boast before his death, in 1764, at the age of eighty-three, that he had printed as many books, on the subject of music, as he had lived years; and that he should leave to his executors an equal number, in manuscript for the use of posterity.

In 1761, he published a Translation of the Life of Handel, from the English; with additions and remarks, which are neither very candid nor liberal. But how should the author of that book expect quarter from him, in which it is asserted, that "Mattheson was no great singer, and only employed occasionally." In refutation of which he assures us, "that he constantly sung the principal parts in the Hamburg operas, during fifteen years, and with such success, that he could command the passion of his audience, by exciting in them, at his pleasure, joy, grief, hope and fear." And who shall venture to doubt of his having possessed these powers, when their effects are thus attested by himself?*

In a work of musical biography and criticism, by Mattheson, called *Grundlage einer Ehren-Pforte*, "Foundation of a triumphal Arch," in honor of music and musicians, published at Hamburg, 1740, in which there is a long and inflated account of himself and his works, which occupies thirty pages, we have, as well as in his annotations on the English Life, a more ample and satisfactory account of Handel's juvenile compositions and adventures, than I have been able to find elsewhere.

After telling us that he arrived at Hamburg in the summer of 1703, rich in genius and good disposition: "Here," says Mattheson, "almost his first acquaintance was myself; as I met with him at the organ of St. Mary Magdalen's Church, July the 30th, whence I conducted him to my father's house, where he was treated with all possible kindness as well as hospitality; and I afterwards not only attended him to organs, choirs, operas, and concerts, but recommended him to several scholars, particularly to one in a certain house, where everybody was much devoted to music.

"At first he only played a *ripieno* violin in the opera orchestra, and behaved as if he could not count five; being naturally inclined to dry humor.†

"At this time he composed extreme long *Airs*

* Journal of a Musical Tour through Germany, &c., vol. ii.

† "I know," says Mattheson, "if he happens to read this, he will laugh in his heart, for he never laughed outwardly; particularly if he remembers the poulterer who travelled with us; the pastry-cook's son who blew the bellows for us at St. Mary's; our parties on the water together; and a hundred other circumstances, still fresh in my mind."

and Cantatas without end; of which, though the harmony was excellent, yet true taste was wanting; which, however, he very soon acquired by his attendance at the opera."

As these young musicians lived much together in great intimacy, they had frequent amicable contests and trials of skill with each other; in which it appearing that they excelled on different instruments, Handel on the organ, and Mattheson on the harpsichord, they mutually agreed not to invade each other's province, and faithfully observed this compact for five or six years.

Mattheson tells us, that in the year 1704, the opera-house at Hamburg happening to be shut, leaving Handel behind him, he travelled to Holland, played on the famous organs, and heard the great performers in that country; made concerts at Amsterdam, and might have been elected organist of Haerlem: having had an offer of that place, with a salary of fifteen hundred Dutch goldens, equal to near a hundred and fifty pounds sterling a year. He had then thoughts of going to England, but was prevented from executing that design, or of accepting the place of organist at Haerlem, by the pressing entreaties he received from the managers of the opera, his family, friends, and confessor; but chiefly by a most kind and obliging letter which was written to him by Handel, from Hamburg. This letter, in order to shew the kind of intimacy which then subsisted between them, Mattheson has inserted in his "Triumphal Arch." It is dated March 18, and was written before clashing interests and rival claims had occasioned any interruption of their friendship; among other expressions of civility from Handel, he gives the following:

"I often wish to enjoy your very agreeable conversation, which I hope will soon happen, as the time approaches, when, without your presence, nothing can be done at the opera. I most humbly intreat you to inform me of your departure from Amsterdam, that I may have an opportunity of shewing my regard, by giving you the meeting."

Handel, at this time, must have been composing his first Opera, in which, depending upon Mattheson to perform the principal man's part, he had, probably, set the songs to his style of singing and compass of voice; but vanity never suffered Mattheson to ascribe Handel's attentions to anything but pure love and kindness.

In his remarks on the English life of Handel, he is particularly severe on that part of it which contains an account of the quarrel which happened between him and that composer, soon after the letter was written: accusing the biographer not only of violating geography, chronology and history, but of a wilful misrepresentation of facts, in relating the circumstances of this breach between them.

Mattheson, who, with all his self-complaisance and pedantry, is generally allowed to have been diligent in finding, and exact in stating facts, after telling us that Handel, when he first came to Hamburg, notwithstanding the exalted station at which he soon arrived, had no better part assigned him in the opera, than the *Second ripieno Violin*; informs us, that "though he then pretended to know nothing, yet he used to be very arch, for he had always a dry way of making the gravest people laugh, without laughing himself. But his superior abilities were soon discovered, when, upon occasion of the harpsichord-player at the opera being absent, he was first persuaded to take his place; for he then shewed himself to be a great master, to the astonishment of every one, except myself, who had frequently heard him before, upon keyed-instruments."

According to Mattheson's own confession, he acquired from Handel, by frequently meeting him at his father's house, and practising with him, a knowledge of modulation, and method of combining sounds, which he could have learned of no one else.

Upon a vacancy in an organist's place at Lubeck, they travelled thither together, and in the *wagen* composed several double fugues, *da mente*, says Mattheson, not *da penna*. Buxtehude was then at Lubeck, and an admirable organ-player; however, Handel's powers on that instrument

* Mattheson's *Ehren Pforte*, p. 354. 1740.

† Leipsic, which is only 24 English miles from Halle, is 200 from Hamburg.

astonished even those who were accustomed to hear that great performer. Handel and Mattheson were prevented from becoming candidates for the place of organist at Lubeck, by a condition that was annexed to the obtaining that office; which was no other than to take with it a wife, whom their constituents were to nominate; but thinking this too great an honor, they precipitately retreated to Hamburg.

About this time an opera, called "Cleopatra," composed by Mattheson, was performed on that stage, in which he acted the part of Anthony himself, and Handel played the harpsichord; but Mattheson being accustomed, upon the death of Anthony, which happens early in the piece, to take the harpsichord, in the character of composer, Handel refused to indulge his vanity, by relinquishing to him this post; which occasioned so violent a quarrel between them, that at going out of the house, Mattheson gave him a slap on the face; upon which both immediately drew their swords, and a duel ensued in the Market-place, before the door of the Opera House; luckily, the sword of Mattheson was broke against a metal button upon Handel's coat, which put an end to the combat, and they were soon after reconciled.

Such is the account, which, long before the death of Handel, Mattheson himself published, concerning the difference that happened between them, during his residence at Hamburg.

The English biographer is very roughly handled by Mattheson for saying that this duel had "more the appearance of assassination than of a encounter," and accuses him of constantly and wilfully diminishing the age of Handel, in order to represent him not only as a prodigy in music, but a youth of too tender years to be possessed of courage, reason, or skill, sufficient to defend himself; but if he had been capable of making a defence, says the author of his Life, "he could not be prepared for it." In answer to this, Mattheson observes, that "Handel, at the time of the quarrel, was twenty years of age; tall, strong, broad-shouldered, and muscular; consequently, well able to defend himself;" and adds, that "a dry slap on the face was no assassination, but rather a friendly hint, to put him on his guard."

This rencounter happened the 5th of December, 1704; and, as a proof of a speedy reconciliation, Mattheson tells us, that on the 30th of the same month, he accompanied the young composer to the rehearsal of his first opera of "Almira," at the theatre, and performed in it the principal part; and that, afterwards, they became greater friends than ever. This opera, though rehearsed at the end of 1704, was not publicly performed till the beginning of 1705, when it was greatly approved.*

On the 25th of February of the same year, he produced his second opera, called "Nero," which had likewise a very favorable reception.† It was at the end of the run of these two dramas that Mattheson, who performed the principal man's part in both, quitted the stage, on his being appointed secretary to the British resident at Hamburg; an office in which he continued to the time of his death, at the distance of near sixty years from his first appointment.‡

That Mattheson had more knowledge than taste, no other proof need be given than the following conceit, which was related to me at Hamburg. Late in life, in setting, as part of his own funeral anthem, the third verse of the fourth chapter of Revelations: "And there was a rainbow round about the throne," he contrived in a

very full score, to make every part form an arch, by a gradual ascent and descent of the notes on paper, in plain counter-point; which appearance to the eyes of the performers, he probably thought would convey the idea of a rainbow to the ears of the congregation!

All the music that I have ever seen by Mattheson is sterile of ideas and uninteresting. It has been said, that he was a great performer on the harpsichord, and that Handel frequently amused himself with playing his pieces; in doing which, if ever he regarded Mattheson as a formidable rival, his triumph must have been very complete in comparing them with his own, or with the inherent powers which he must have felt of producing better whenever he pleased. I am in possession of a set of Twelve Lessons by Mattheson, engraved on copper, by Fletcher, in tall folio of eighteen staved paper, London 1714; who, in a Preface speaks of them as "Pieces which claim precedence to all others of this nature; as being composed by one of the greatest masters of the age, in a taste altogether pleasing and sublime." They consist of Overtures, Preludes, Fugues, Allemandes, Courantes, Gigue, and Aires; but, notwithstanding the editor's eulogy, like all the harpsichord music I ever saw, anterior to Handel's admirable *Suites de Pieces*, first Set, 1720; though in good harmony, it impresses the mind with no better idea of accent, grace, or passion, than the tinkling of triangles, or bells of a pack-horse; and is truly such as degrades the instrument to the level of "sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal."

From 1705 to 1708, when Handel set two other operas, "Florinda" and "Dafne," he furnished nothing for the stage; though he had many scholars, composed harpsichord-pieces, single songs, and cantatas, innumerable.*

During his residence at Hamburg, Mattheson allows, that Handel improved his own style greatly, by his constant attendance at the opera; and says, that he was even more powerful upon the organ, in extempore fugues and counterpoint, than the famous Kuhnau of Leipzig, who was at this time regarded as a prodigy.

[To be continued.]

MUSICAL FESTIVITIES.—Congreve, in a letter to a friend, speaks in terms of great admiration of the display made, when the prize of 200 guineas to the most successful composer of his "Judgment of Paris" formed the occasion of quite a musical festival. He records that the voices taking part in the music reached the great number of eighty-five! This was in 1701.

Reaching almost as far back, we have records of the Annual Festivals of the Sons of the Clergy, which were in great measure musical, and were held in various cities of England. These were all charitable, as have been the meetings at Gloucester, Norwich, Worcester, and more recently at Birmingham, Liverpool and other cities, the reports of which now form a part of our regular staple of foreign art news. The idea of a musical festival was, therefore, nothing new, when the great Commemoration of Handel was proposed in 1783, and steps were taken to form and carry out a plan, which in its comprehensiveness and grandeur should eclipse any thing recorded in the history of modern music up to that time.

The original intention was to have this festival, not only in Westminster Abbey where the mighty master was entombed, but also upon the centennial

anniversary of his birth. Circumstances, however, caused the performances to be deferred until the 26th of May. The three days of a festival were by command of the King extended to four, and at the request of the Queen to five, a performance of the "Messiah" upon the fifth, concluding the "Commemoration." With this exception, all the concerts were miscellaneous in character, and save that of the second day, were given in the Abbey. The vocal and instrumental forces numbered 525; of whom nearly half (250) were instrumental.

The success of the festival led to others in the succeeding years. In 1785 the performers were 616 in number; in 1786 they were increased to 741; in 1787 to 806.

These festivals excited great attention throughout Europe, and a few years later, Hans Georg Naegeli, at Zurich, in Switzerland, and George Frederic Bischoff, teacher at the Lyceum in Frankenhäusen in Thuringia, each in his own circle, and without concert with each other, formed a plan for something of the kind.

Naegeli was the originator of the "Swiss Musical Union," and the festivals of this association were the first upon the continent of Europe. A grand one at Zurich, in the year 1812, was a marked epoch in the musical history of that part of Europe.

Bischoff's first festival was almost cotemporaneous with the first of the Swiss Union, having taken place at Frankenhäusen, in 1804. The disasters of the wars with Napoleon prevented a second until 1810. This was, however, a very important one, Spohr, then capellmeister at Gotha, joining Bischoff, and through the influence of his position, enabling him to draw together the musical forces of all the small courts and cities in that section of Germany.

The peace of 1815 was celebrated in many places by monster concerts. Beethoven composed music for one at Vienna, and these meetings were the origin in many places of annual festivals.

Besides the festival of which Bischoff may be called the father and which was celebrated many years, meeting at different cities alternately—as at Hanover, Frankenhäusen, Hildesheim, Heimsstadt, &c.—another German one included the musical circles of Hamburg, Lubeck, Altona and other cities of that part of Germany; a third met alternately at Dusseldorf, Cologne, Elberfeld, Aix la Chapelle and neighboring cities; a fourth at Mannheim, Frankfurt on the Main, Mayence, Heidelberg, &c.; a fifth was confined to Breslau and other cities of Silesia; a sixth met in the Prussian cities upon the shores of the Baltic; and so on.

More recently similar festivals have been held in the cities of Belgium and Holland. In most of these cases the festivals have been devised and carried through by combining together the musical associations, choirs and orchestras of small places, it being the only means possible of producing grand works there with any adequate forces, and hence they have been of a popular character. In Catholic sections of Germany, the cathedrals furnish the best materials for choirs and orchestras, and at their festivals, works of the highest character—oratorios by Bach, Handel, Mendelssohn, the Grand Second Mass, and the Ninth Symphony by Beethoven, Mozart's Requiem, and the like, forming the staple music of the programme. On these occasions the greatest talent is engaged, and the results are similar to those of the grand English festivals.

In other parts of Germany the musical forces of the festivals are not seldom confined to the clubs of male singers, which under a great variety of names exist in all the cities of Germany. For festivals of this character Dr. Loewe's "Brazen Serpent," an oratorio for men's voices, was written. The annual *Musikfest* of our German fellow-citizens is of the latter character.

Another species of festival—if we may so speak—is common in Germany, at which a society of long standing takes the initiative, and which it carries through, being reinforced by invited guests until the chorus and orchestra is as large as can possibly be accommodated.

Such was the grand festival of the "Society of

* The German title of this opera is: *Der in Kronen erlangte Glückwechsel, oder Almira, Königin von Castilien*; that is, "The Vicissitudes of Royalty, or Almira Queen of Castile." There was an Epilogue to this drama, called "The Genius of Europe," set by Keyser.

† This opera was styled in German: *Nero, oder die durch Blut und Mord erlangte Liebe*; "Nero, or, Love obtained by Blood and Murder."

‡ Mattheson's first opera, called the "Pleiades," was performed at Hamburg, 1699. "Porfenna," the second, 1701. "Victor, Duke of Normandy," the third, of which Schieferdecker composed the first act, Mattheson the second, and Bronner the third, was performed the same year. "Cleopatra," the fourth, which occasioned the quarrel between Mattheson and Handel, 1704.

* I procured at Hamburg, in 1773, a manuscript collection of cantatas, by the principal composers of the early part of the present century; among which are two by Handel, which I never saw elsewhere; and these, it is most probable, were produced in that city, during his residence there, previous to, his arrival in England, or journey into Italy. One of these cantatas has a spirited accompaniment for a harpsichord, obligato. At the end is a short air, which seems to contain the germ, or subject, of a favorite harpsichord lesson, printed in the second volume of his *Pieces de Clavecin*, p. 5, the identical movement with which he ended the last concerto which he ever played in public. This cantata is the more likely to have been composed early in his youth, as there are some little liberties, and negligences in the composition, which have never appeared in his later productions.

the Friends of Music in the Austrian Capital," which took place November 7th 10th, 1839. The place selected for the concerts was a huge military riding-school building in the city, and the number of performers reached 1027. Of these the vocalists were, soprani 220, alti 160, tenori 160, bassi 160.

In our own country we are not aware that any musical meeting, which can properly be called a musical festival, save the German "Fests" mentioned above, and the conventions of psalmists—which are teachers' institutes—and possibly the Barnum concerts at the New York Crystal Palace, has taken place. To that which takes place today, in the Music Hall, we therefore give the credit of being the first.

From my Diary, No. 4.

MAY 25.—Now that the Festival is over, there is opportunity for a few "Notes and Queries."

1. Mr. Winthrop, in his Address, mentions a lost Oratorio, performed in Boston in 1789.

Here is the original advertisement of the concert, at which "Jonah" was sung. It will be seen that the concert was not given in honor of Washington, but to obtain funds to finish the colonnade of the Stone Chapel. As to the oratorio, I have the impression that some account of it is to be found in the London Harmonicon, but that work is not at hand. Perhaps some of our lovers of English music may be able to tell us the author. My recollection of having somewhere read a notice of it, is quite distinct.

The following advertisement is from the "Herald of Freedom," (Boston), Oct. 23d, 1789.

FOR PUBLIC ORNAMENT. AN ORATORIO OR CONCERT OF SACRED MUSIC.

On Wednesday next will be performed at the Stone Chapel in this town, An Oratorio or Concert of Sacred Music, to assist in finishing the Colonnade or Portico of said Chapel, agreeable to the original design.

PART THE FIRST.

- 1—Full Anthem..... Composed by Mr. Selby.
- 2—The favorite Air in the "Messiah," (Composed by the celebrated Handel.) "Comfort ye my people."..... By Mr. Rea.
- 3—Organ Concerto..... By Mr. Selby.
- 4—The favorite Air in the Oratorio of "Samson," (Composed by the celebrated Handel.) "Let the bright Seraphim."..... By Mr. Rea.

PART THE SECOND.

The Oratorio of "Jonah" complete. The Solos by Messrs. Rea, Fay, Bremer and Dr. Rogerson. The Choruses by the Independent Musical Society. The instrumental parts by a society of Gentlemen, with the band of his Most Christian Majesty's feet.

As the above Oratorio has been highly applauded by the best judges, and has never been performed in America, and as the first performers in this Country will be joined by the excellent band of His Most Christian Majesty's Squadron, the Public will have every reason to expect a more finished and delightful Performance than was ever exhibited in the United States.

The music to be given at half-past 2 o'clock.

Tickets at half a dollar each, may be had at Dr. Winship's, Union Street; B. Guild's Bookstore, and at the Post Office, in Cornhill, and at J. Templeman's, W. Burley's, and B. Russell's Offices in State Street.

The next number of the paper, Oct. 27th, contains again the programme, with the following introduction, and closing remark:

FOR PUBLIC ORNAMENT.

The Oratorio or Concert of Sacred Music, which was to have been on Wednesday last, will be performed this day, at the Stone Chapel in Boston, in presence of the President of the United States.

[Here follows the Programme.]

The music to begin precisely at 11 o'clock, A. M. No person will be admitted without a ticket. No more tickets will be sold than will admit of the auditory being conveniently accommodated. Tickets for admission on the 21st inst. will be received. The doors open at nine o'clock.

2. Mr. Winthrop, in a note, speaks of Bach, "of whose works so many are lost."

The idea that Bach's works have not been well preserved, is common, and is based, I think, upon English authorities. It is, however, a mistake. Bach himself was very careful of his manuscripts, and those written for the Thomas School at Leipzig, are still preserved there, almost without exception. During the time of Fasch and Zelter, the Sing Akademie of

Berlin made great efforts to procure Bach manuscripts, and Bach's sons, all famous composers, appreciating fully the greatness of their father, allowed nothing to be lost. In the Royal Library at Berlin, the works of Bach in original manuscripts, or in MS. copies, amount to hundreds, which have never been printed, unless they have been included in the great edition now in process of publication at Leipzig. In fact, I doubt if the works of any other composer have been so generally preserved as those of Bach.

3. Dwight quotes Zelter in relation to the original position of the chorus: "Unto us a child is born," in the "Messiah." Zelter thinks it was intended to be after the annunciation of the Shepherds by the Angel. In this case Handel would make a dramatic scene of it. Now Zelter could have had no other means of judging, except his own taste, of fitness of place. I look upon this chorus as being in its proper place, as we sing it, for I conceive it to be not dramatic but prophetic. It is the close, and fitting close, of the prophecies. To decide the matter, I have been up to the College Library and examined the original edition of the "Messiah"—the copy as it was first performed—for all the changes and additions made for the second performance are printed as an appendix—and find, after the recitative: "For behold a Virgin," the order to be this:

"Oh thou that tellest,"
"For behold darkness,"
"The People that walked,"
"For unto us a child is born."

Is this not conclusive?

4. In addition to the occasions mentioned by Mr. Winthrop, upon which the Handel and Haydn Society furnished music, I think of two worthy of special record: at the obsequies of John Quincy Adams in Faneuil Hall, and at the Water Celebration on the Common, in 1848, on both of which occasions, C. E. Horn was conductor.

Query—What about Mr. Selby, the organist?

Musical Correspondence.

[The following letter has been crowded out for two weeks.]

BERLIN, APRIL 5.—In my last I gave a brief review of what Berlin has furnished us in the way of Opera during the past three months. Let us glance now at the Concerts.

In the Symphony Concerts of the Royal Capelle, I have to single out as worthy of especial notice the grandest of all piano-forte Concertos, that in E flat by Beethoven, in which the might of Beethoven's genius announces itself at the very beginning in a manner so inspiring, that the languid mood, in which the preceding overture, Gade's "From the Highlands," had left the audience, vanished suddenly like clouds and vapors before the sun. Herr PAUER, from London, played it with technical certainty, and with much warmth and truth of conception. The rendering, which was richly applauded, revealed from the outset that genuine artistic sense, which looks right at the essence of the matter, and conscientiously and faithfully delivers the entrusted value to the hearers. By way of novelty, the last of these soirées gave us a Symphony for stringed instruments by Sebastian Bach; but the work had little more than historical interest; it lacks sensuous euphony; the melody scarcely reaches any free development owing to the too great predominance of polyphony; and the strictly logical consistency of treatment excludes all participation of sentiment or fancy; the ear too is wearied by the monotony and cutting sharpness of the rhythm. Bach belongs among the creators of instrumental music; from him it received, together with organic form in correspondence with the laws of artistic logic, the right of independent existence. Before it could attain to its peculiar power of expression, its forms had to be so far moulded and made tractable, that it could receive into itself and represent an intellectual meaning. In a few tens of years instrumental music experienced a development such as the other arts could scarcely

point to in as many centuries. As a splendid evidence of this, Beethoven's C minor symphony closed the evening in a masterly performance. The impassioned energy of the first movement, the infinite depth of feeling of the Andante, the often extremely bitter humor of the Scherzo, and the majestic pomp of the Finale made a profound impression. All the performers seemed to emulate one another in rendering enthusiastic homage to the master of Symphony.

Our music director, LIEBIG, to whom so many owe their only opportunities of enjoying and learning from the symphonies of Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven, was presented in his concert hall, on Christmas eve, with a costly cup, bearing an appropriate inscription, as a mark of gratitude from his always numerous audience.... Of great Oratorio performances the most important have been the Mass, by Bach, in B minor, the grand Mass of Beethoven, and the prince Radzivil's music to Goethe's *Faust*. In the mass by Bach, all those sublime and powerful traits which lend the stamp of immortality to his St. Matthew "Passion," are found concentrated and not less interesting. Here the instrumentation especially claims attention. We must not forget that Bach was the greatest of organ-players. At the organ he controlled and held the whole together. The performance by the Sing-Akademie was satisfactory; but the orchestra lacked many a fine trait, which should be indispensable to an orchestra that ventures upon the highest tasks of Art. The execution of Beethoven's *Missa Solennis* did full honor to Stern's Union. In spite of the gigantic difficulties of this undertaking, the high range of voice which Beethoven assumes in the singers, the exceeding strain upon the mental powers of all who take part in it, on which the composer counts for every moment, the work unfolded its sublime proportions beautifully clear. Especial praise is due to the self-sacrificing zeal of the female chorus. They form the essential support of every amateur society; they lend a poetic, festival tone to every concert. A performance before the public is to them an event to which they look forward a long time with pride and with enthusiasm.

Goethe's *Faust*, with Prince Radzivil's music, was performed by the Singakademie in aid of the Schiller fund. In this work of the cultivated, Art-inspired prince, dilettantism presents itself to us in its most amiable aspect. Throughout we recognize in it a warm, easily excitable nature, a beautiful and truly human individuality, which wins our sympathy. The performance, (unfortunately with piano instead of orchestra), was satisfactory. The choruses, in which the centre of gravity of the music lies, were sung with fervor and precision. The solos too were finely rendered by Mmes. WUERST and STRAHL, and Messrs. GEIER and SEIDL.

The last concerts of the Opera Academy have enjoyed an increased interest and a more and more numerous audience, particularly since this institution has possessed an orchestra of its own, established by the director, Herr ZOFFE, in spite of the greatest difficulties and hindrances, as a distinct organization of hired musicians and devoted amateurs. These concerts have brought out some difficult and rarely heard ensembles from the finest operas; for instance, the sextet finale from Mozart's *Don Juan*, which, wonderfully beautiful as it is in itself, is always, from overweighing dramatic reasons, omitted on the stage. Under the circumstances, both singers and orchestra achieved much that was worthy of notice, especially as regards the zeal and carefulness of the single voices, and of the director himself. The whole undertaking has evidently, by dint of industry and perseverance, made great progress during the winter. The summer will give the director leisure to prepare and organize a good deal for the coming year. We may then hope to see spring up a class of concerts which will go far to fill many a gap left by other

operas and concerts. For where have we an opportunity to hear the music of many excellent operas which no one theatre can comprehend? Are not even the most genial creations of great composers, such as Gluck, Mozart, Spohr, Winter, about the same as buried? not to speak of wholly new productions, which, for whatever reason, are not able to open a way for themselves.

Of the Quartet and Trio Soirées, the most famous have been those of Messrs. von BUELOW, LAUB and RADECKE, ZIMMERMANN, GRUENWALD and ESPENHAHN. Of foreign concert-givers the most conspicuous has been CLARA NOVELLO, who had not been heard here for twenty years, and who has stirred up anew a general enthusiasm. *J.F.*

NEW YORK, MAY 21.—I did not learn until too late, that your paper was to be issued already to-day, and so was obliged to defer my letter. I have, however, only to record the final successful performance of "The Seven Sleepers," by the Harmonic Society. This concert was on a larger scale than the former ones, given at the City Assembly Rooms, and with the aid of a small (by no means, as announced, a grand) orchestra. In spite of the weather being quite unfavorable, (the ill luck of Mr. EISEL in this respect seeming to have been transferred to the Harmonic Society), there was a goodly audience assembled. The first part consisted of a Te Deum and Jubilate, for Solo, Quartet and Chorus, by Mr. BRISTOW, the conductor of the Society, of which the latter particularly was a very pleasing and well-harmonized composition. Miss BRAINERD also sang: "Hear ye, Israel," with much better effect than at the last Philharmonic, the room being infinitely better adapted to her voice on this occasion. She also had one of the principal solo parts in the "Seven Sleepers," which formed the second half of the concert. The music of this Cantata was very beautiful, and must please every one. I do not remember ever hearing of its being performed in Boston, although here it has been quite a favorite.

The subject is very dramatic, and furnishes room for a great variety of composition. I may, in a future letter, give you an analysis of it, and speak also of some of the other works of Dr. LOEWE, the composer. For the present, I will only say that the performance on Thursday night did not do it justice at all. The orchestra, though composed of some of our best Philharmonic players, was miserable, owing evidently to want of pains and interest in the matter. The Chorus falls very short of that of the Mendelssohn Union, and although it had been so long practising this composition, sung very indifferently. Of the solo singers, there were but two or three who were fit to be such, and these were chiefly among the ladies. Besides, of course, Miss Brainerd, I may mention Miss ANDREWS, (who sings, however, with too much consciousness), and Miss ROBINSON, whose full, rich, mezzo soprano voice, and perfectly unassuming manner, are exceedingly pleasing. By this deficiency in the solo parts, the most beautiful and effective portion of the Cantata, which forms the climax of its interest, viz.: the awakening of the "Seven Sleepers," one after another, to join in a solemn canon-choral, was completely spoiled. Let us hope that the Society may study this work through again, and let us hear it more perfectly next season.

I trust you have better weather for your Festival than we are blessed with here. What a feast of music you are enjoying! I hope it all will go off well. One great mistake has been made, however, in the Festival not having been sufficiently heralded abroad. As far as I know, only one of our papers, (the *Evening Post*), has had any advertisement of it, while some of the most influential ones had heard so little of it that they did not think it worth while to send on a reporter. How can the custom become national, if confined only to one city?

NEWPORT, R. I., MAY 30.—On Friday evening last, we availed ourselves of the opportunity to attend a concert given by the Newport Musical Institute, under the direction of Mr. EREN TOURJEE, which was of such a character as to deserve some notice in the columns of your valuable journal. The programme was an excellent one, both as to the selection of the pieces, and their arrangement. It contained a variety of sacred and secular music, from the best composers of the present and former times; and solos, duets, quartets, songs and choruses (principally from Mozart's Twelfth Mass) were so intermingled as to keep fully alive, during the whole evening, the unflagging interest of the multitude that thronged Aquidneck Hall. The number in attendance, together with the crowds that went away unable to gain admittance, bore good testimony to the interest which has been awakened in that city on the subject of musical culture, and the public appreciation of music of the highest style.

We are informed that the Institute, though a new organization, now numbers about 160 members. For the last few months it has been rehearsing under the direction of Mr. Tourjee, and the members have made commendable progress in the culture of correct musical taste and good execution. At least, this was the impression gained by listening to their performance last evening, many portions of which, though often heard, are seldom more effectively rendered. A very good orchestra has also been formed, which gave very efficient aid with several instruments, some of them superbly played. We had thought of mentioning the names of some singers and performers who won particular favor, but forbear, lest we should seem invidious.

We gather the following facts indicative of the prospects of music in Newport. A new hall is in process of erection for the rehearsals of the Institute, and is to be dedicated about the 20th of June. It is also in contemplation to erect a large Music Hall at an expense of \$50,000. Many excellent concerts are anticipated this season, and it is hoped the Germanian and other artists who often pass the summer there may do much to aid the good work of musical reform so auspiciously begun. With the annual gathering of artists in Newport, and this flourishing Institute, Boston is in danger of losing her laurels in the musical world, at least for the season when laurels are freshest, and Newport seems likely to bear the palm. *SOLO.*

Dwight's Journal of Music.

BOSTON, JUNE 6, 1857.

HANDEL.—It seems to us a fit time, while those mighty fugues and Hallelujahs of the "Messiah" are yet ringing in all our ears after our own great Festival, and while the notes of preparation for a yet grander Handelian Commemoration salute us from abroad, to lay before our readers what we have never done before, some sketch of the life of Handel. Among so many Musical biographies, we have hitherto omitted Handel, simply because the theme was so familiar to really musical readers, and in waiting for an occasion which should clothe it with a more general and fresh interest. The occasion has come, which we improve by commencing to copy on another page the very readable and pleasant sketch from Dr. Burney's account of the Commemoration in Westminster Abbey, in 1784. To be sure it was written many years ago, and can not contain all that is now known of the great composer. But it has in the first place the recommendation of moderate length; and again that of presenting the essential well-

known facts in a connected, interesting shape, wherewith it will be wholesome just now to refresh our memories.

These reasons will suffice to justify the going back to so old a source, (a very rare book, too,) just at the time of the appearance of a long expected full and critical *Life of Handel*, in England. We have before spoken of the researches in London of M. Victor Schœlcher, a French refugee, and most devout admirer of Handel. His book is at length announced and is reviewed by Chorley in the *Athenæum* of May 9th. We have not yet seen it here. It is undoubtedly the most elaborate work upon the subject which has yet appeared. Yet, if we are to trust Chorley, who, in spite of his strong English prejudices, appears to give good reasons for his judgment, "the life of Handel has still to be written." A couple of extracts from the *Athenæum* article give some notion of the excellencies and defects of the book.

That M. Schœlcher's book is well timed there can be no doubt—that it has been forced out to suit a particular period no one should assume. M. Schœlcher's researches have been so well known to the musical and antiquarian world for some years past, that malice itself would not dream of charging him with the poor design of putting forward a catch-penny book. There is something in the circumstances of its authorship which appeals to every genial sympathy. The sight of one so extreme in his political convictions as Handel's biographer has elsewhere proclaimed himself to be, turning to account exile and pause, by entering the quiet domains of Art—that fairy garden where the rose, be it ever so red, does not signify rebellion—neither, be it ever so white, does it typify the stainless traditions of right divine—is a spectacle so rare as to engage the favor of all those who object to see politics taken up as a trade, not as a conviction; and who thus (whatever opinions a man may have held) appreciate as an act of dignity the politician's retirement into gentler pursuits, when the time does not call him forth. Neither zeal, nor labor, nor money, nor enthusiastic reverence has been wanting to M. Schœlcher during the preparation and arrangement of this biography. Yet it will scarcely satisfy either the general reader or the more strictly educated musician as a life of the man Handel or as an essay on those musical glories the supremacy of which the Haydns, Mozarts, Beethovens, Mendelssohns, and Rossinis of later times have not one, by a breath, ever thought to dispute.

We are bound to say, in continuation, that passion for (rather than understanding of) his subject pervades M. Schœlcher's treatment of it, where Handel is considered not morally but musically. In a humor akin to that of the recent school of Beethoven's idolaters, M. Schœlcher seems to have entered on his task in a spirit of boundless faith and unlimited acceptance. His divine man is a god who neither hungers nor thirsts, nor falters, nor does aught amiss. * * * We yield to none in our deep admiration of Handel as the greatest poet in his art who ever lived—the Shakespeare of Music, whose greatness will more and more reveal itself in proportion as intelligence goes hand-in-hand with rapture. But such a wholesale glorification as we find here—confounding what is permanent with what was temporary, what is good with what is less good—amounts to nothing less than a complete abnegation of all knowledge, power, and genuine faculty of loving. In part it arises from the want of musical knowledge, confessed by M. Schœlcher—in part from the impetuosity of worship. Be the cause what it may, the result is unsatisfactory. * * *

It is not unlikely that the English press will teem with works on Handel from this time until the great Crystal Palace Festival in 1859. M. Schœlcher has already in preparation another volume, to contain a complete Catalogue of Handel's works; and we see among the London announcements of books just published: "HANDEL: his Life, Personal and Professional; with Thoughts on Sacred Music. A Sketch. By Mrs. BRAY, author of the 'Life of Stothard,' &c. Ward & Co. Price 2 shillings."

Musical Chit-Chat.

The Festival is over, and the order of the day, for a brief spell, is Italian Opera. MAX MARETZKE and company, fresh from a second profitable campaign in Philadelphia, and after playing for a couple of nights this week at the New York Academy, will open at the Boston Theatre on Monday evening a season of "positively seven nights only." The performances will be on Monday, Wednesday and Friday evenings, and Saturday afternoon; prices \$1.00 for parquette, balcony and first circle, 50 cents for second circle. On Monday Mme. GAZZANIGA, who seems to have made a prodigious sensation by her voice and her fine acting, will appear in Verdi's *Traviata*, its first production in our city. BRIGNOLI and AMODIO will take part in it. Others of the troupe are: Boston's worthy favorite, ADELAIDE PHILLIPPS, Signors COLETTI, ASSONI, BARRATINI, QUINTO and MUELLER. . . . At the new Academy in Philadelphia, where Opera seems to have set up its headquarters in this country, (always excepting New Orleans), the Italian is to be succeeded next week by a German troupe, with Mme. JOHANSEN as the prima donna. They commence with Flotow's Frenchy little opera, *Martha*, on Monday. The MORELLI opera experiment in New York has proved a failure. Mme. DE WILLHORST has taken flight for Europe, for more finishing. . . . Mme. LAGRANGE has got back from her Western tour, and announces a short series of "farewell" concerts in New York.

The Choir of the Unitarian Society at Jamaica Plain gave a Sacred Concert on Wednesday evening, assisted by a chorus of amateur singers, and Mr. L. H. SOUTHARD as organist. The programme included organ voluntaries, choruses and songs from Handel, Mozart, Spohr, Rossini, Costa, Weber; anthems by Webbe, &c. . . . Accounts of OLE BULL's successes reach us from many places North and East.

At the adjourned meeting of the Handel and Haydn Society, on Wednesday evening last, the following officers were elected:—

President, C. F. Chickering—Vice President, Geo. Hews—Secretary, L. B. Barnes—Treasurer, M. S. Parker—Librarian, Edw. Faxon—Trustees, J. S. Farlow, H. L. Hazelton, A. O. Bigelow, J. P. Draper, D. W. Wiswell, O. J. Faxon, Theron J. Dale, and George H. Chickering, in place of Ephm. Wildes, who declined a reelection.

The society voted its thanks to Hon. R. C. Winthrop, for his oration, and also voted to accept the invitation to sing at Charlestown on the 17th, an original ode composed by Hon Geo. Lunt. Thirty-four new members have joined the Society the past year, and now that it has led the way in Festivals, it will naturally draw to itself many more.

The total receipts of the Festival were \$5,336 00, and the expenditures are estimated at \$7,299 00, leaving a deficiency of \$1,963 00 to be assessed upon the guarantors at the rate of thirty per cent. upon their several subscriptions. The guaranty was subscribed by quite a large number of persons in sums ranging from \$500 to \$25 and less. We have not heard of one who does not bear the tax quite cheerfully; for all regard the Festival as a complete success, full of encouragement for like attempts hereafter. Perhaps the uninitiated would like to know how much it costs to get up such an affair. Here are the principal items:

For Orchestra, Extra music, Loan of Libraries, Copying music, &c.	\$2,917 45
" Vocal and Instrumental Soloists.	1,337 00
" Printing, Advertising, Posting, &c.	1,269 73
" Rent of Hall, and alterations, together with Doorkeepers, Ticket-sellers and Ushers.	995 20
" Conductor, Organist, Librarians, &c.	493 73

It strikes us this is very modest pay for the Conductor and the Organist, considering their indefatigable

labors, throughout all the numerous rehearsals and in private—labors that would seem to outweigh what is done by all the solo-singers. But CARL ZERRAHN has found further reward, not alone in glory, but in a very pleasant occasion which we were too late to chronicle last week: to-wit, a meeting of ladies and gentlemen of the Society in Chickering's rooms, when the president in a neat speech presented the Conductor with a purse of \$200 in gold, subscribed by members as a hearty testimonial of their sense of his great services in conducting them so safely and so gloriously through. Mr. Zerrahn and wife are already on their way to Europe, for a summer visit to the Fatherland.

A writer in the *Daily Advertiser* closes a notice of our recent musical Festival with these timely hints:

Now that it is over, a great many people "are sorry that they did not go"—"did not appreciate how fine it was going to be," etc. etc., but a great many more think that enthusiasm on the subject is "humbly," and that it is a waste of time to listen to music by daylight. Merchants and lawyers think it impossible to leave their counting-rooms and offices in the morning. But did the "solid men of Boston" think it folly to close their stores for half a day when an agricultural fair was held there, and beautiful horses were to be seen at the South End? We would not undervalue that holiday—our people have but too few of them, and they are often ill employed. But we would esteem music worthy to fill one of our rare vacations. Let those who believe it to be one of God's best gifts to man, cherish it in a religious spirit, and guard themselves at least as carefully from the enthusiasm of the stock exchange as from the enthusiasm of the "Divine Art."

Was there ever a time when among us the imagination stood more in need of purification!—when it sought lower and more degrading stimulants than have been greedily swallowed within the last few months? From hideous facts and corrupt fancies, let us gratefully turn to the fresh springs of another country and another century, and thank heaven for these influences, which are "not for an age, but for all time."

Our City fathers have at length, not without opposition in the Council, appropriated \$2,000 for music on the Common, two evenings in the week, for three months, to commence forthwith; also occasionally at the South end, and at East Boston.

Musical Intelligence.

London.

SACRED HARMONIC SOCIETY.—The oratorio of *Judas Maccabæus*—Handel's third greatest work—perhaps never enjoyed so excellent a chance of being appreciated as at its first performance this season by the members of the Sacred Harmonic Society. The execution on the whole was the finest to which we have ever listened. Urged to more than ordinary energy by the anticipation of the forthcoming grand "Festival" at the Crystal Palace—which is to include *Judas Maccabæus* as well as the *Messiah* and *Israel in Egypt*—the Sacred Harmonic Society, under the indefatigable guidance of Mr. Costa, has bestirred itself in a manner hitherto unexampled; and it is not too much to say that the performances this year, with one or two exceptions duly recorded, have surpassed in general excellence anything previously attempted at Exeter Hall. Grand, however, as was, in a more than usual number of instances, the execution of the unparalleled *Israel*, that of *Judas Maccabæus* was still more striking. From the almost irreproachable style in which the most magnificent and stupendous of the choruses—"Disdainful of danger," "Hear us, O Lord" (Part I.); "Fallen is the foe" (one of the choral masterpieces of Handel), "We hear! we hear!" and "We never will bow down" (Part II.); and, last not least, the "Hallelujah" (Part III.)—were delivered, it seemed as if Mr. Costa had either been endowed with a magic wand that enabled him (hopeless task heretofore) to make the whole of the "600" not only sing, but sing correctly, or, which we have reason to believe still more difficult, to persuade all those incapable of singing in time and tune to stay away from the concert.

The solo singers were Madame Clara Novello, Madame Rudersdorff, Miss Dolby, Mr. Thomas, Mr. Montem Smith, and Mr. Sims Reeves. All of these ladies and gentlemen sang their very best; but, as customary in this particular oratorio, the chief share of the honor fell to the representative of the principal tenor music, to whom the most striking and effective airs are allotted. Mr. Sims Reeves never sang more admirably than on the present occasion. The two fine songs, "Call forth thy powers" and "How vain is

man," were distinguished by the nicest artistic discrimination, and an acquaintance with the proper mode of rendering the music of Handel which perhaps no other singer of the present time can boast to the same extent. But it was in the fierce declamatory outburst, "Sound an alarm," that Mr. Sims Reeves made the greatest impression. It would not be easy to imagine anything more vocally energetic, and yet at the same time more pure and noble in its simplicity than the delivery of this impetuous air, which raised the audience to the highest pitch of enthusiasm. Another piece worth mentioning was the duet for soprano and contralto, "O never bow we down" (which leads to the emphatic chorus already named), sung to perfection by Madame Novello and Miss Dolby. The principal bass music was very carefully given by Mr. Thomas, and the performance altogether afforded unqualified satisfaction to a vast assembly.

The next oratorio—announced for Wednesday, May 6—is Mendelssohn's *Elijah*.—*Times*, April 20.

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE.—In the third performance of *La Favorita* (April 18) the new tenor, GIUGLINI, confirmed the impression of his triumphant debut, and Mlle. SPEZIA also grew in favor.—The next event was the *rentrée* of Mlle. PICCOLOMINI in *La Figlia del Reggimento*, which drew an overflowing audience. The *Musical World* says:

The first appearance of the charming little *vivandière*, as she hurried down the declivity, was the signal for a hearty cheer from all parts of the house, which increased in intensity as Mlle. Piccolomini ran forward to the footlights. At least two minutes were consumed in the demonstration. * * Mlle. Piccolomini looked more piquant and charming than ever. Her voice has gained in power, she exhibits greater command of the *sostenuto*, and vocalizes with greater facility.

Our old friend BELLETTI, always the true artist, took the part of the old sergeant. The new tenor, Sig. STECCHI BOTTARDI, was not a "hit."—Next followed a revival of *La Traviata* twice, with la Piccolomini again as the heroine, Giuglini as Alfredo, BENEVENTANO as Germont, and Mlle. BAILLOU as Annetta.

April 28.—*I Puritani*; given for the sake of introducing Mlle. ORTOLANI, a young prima donna from Lisbon. The *Times* says:

* * * At the first glance the countenance of Signor Giuglini does not seem particularly animated, and his movements before he is aroused are somewhat unwieldy. The fact is, he does not at once exhibit his true character to its full extent; but as the piece progresses he progresses likewise, and when the emotions of the character have become his own his hearers are perfectly at his command, overpowered at once by the most exquisite singing and the most persuasive eloquence. Before last night it might be said that Signor Giuglini promised much, and a doubt might have been expressed whether the promise would be fully performed. The doubt is now set at rest. He has surpassed all expectations, however sanguine.

Mlle. Ortolani, who had been expected from the commencement of the season, made her *début* as Elvira. She was evidently nervous on her entrance, and her voice, which is a pure soprano, of somewhat thin quality, was not at first quite satisfactory; but in the *palace* she showed a marvellous facility of execution, especially in the second verse, which she embellished with entirely new variations, displaying at once the extensive range of her voice in the upper region, and her command over its resources. This gained her the suffrages of the audience, who loudly demanded a repetition of the favorite air, and in the later portion of the opera she confirmed their good opinion, giving, moreover, great signs of histrionic intelligence. She will probably do good service as a vocalist of the Persian school, who has been most assiduous in the cultivation of her art.

Signor Belletti had not quite weight enough for Giorgio, and Signor Beneventano had rather too much weight for Ricardo, but they gave the famous duet with great spirit, and it received the customary honors.

In several repetitions of the *Puritani*, Mlle. Ortolani gained ground with the public, and Sig. Giuglini "created a profound sensation in the *Ellà tremante*."—La Piccolomini and Giuglini were again brought together in *Lucia di Lammermoor*. The *Musical World* says:

Mlle. Piccolomini acts the part with more passion, feeling, and variety of sentiment than any of her predecessors. Her singing, as a matter of course, was unequal. We are, however, more than ever satisfied, that she may become a real vocalist.

The "incomparable" ALBONI was announced for Tuesday, May 12th, in *Il Barbiere*, Herr REICHHARDT to be Count Almaviva.

ROYAL ITALIAN OPERA.—Donizetti's *Maria di Rohan*, one of his weakest operas, but made famous by RONCONI's impersonation of the Duc de Chevreuse,

was the piece for the 18th of April. As to the performance, we copy from the *Musical World* again:

To the psychological observer Ronconi presents a world in his acting, from the most refined delicacy, through all the gradations of feeling, to the most overwhelming passion. In the end his despair is contagious, and the agony of the artist is communicated to the spectator. Ronconi has been more than once called the Edmund Kean of the lyric stage; and certainly in no character has he more fairly entitled himself to the comparison than in that of the Duke of Chevreuse.

Mlle. Rosa Devries is not exactly the *beau idéal* of a Maria, nor is she a transcendent tragic actress. She is, however, a good singer, a conscientious artiste, and, on that account alone, entitled to consideration.

Signor Neri-Baraldi, who appeared as Chalais, has a very pleasing tenor voice, and knows how to use it, and is altogether one of the best representatives of the part we have seen.

Madame Nantier Didiée represented Armando di Gondi, and a more admirable representative could hardly be desired. Her acting was replete with intelligence; every movement identified the careful and observant artist, while her singing was even better than her acting.

After a repetition of *Maria di Rohan* came two performances of *Il Trovatore*, with GRISI and MARIO in the chief parts; GRAZIANI, as the Count, NANTIER-DIDIÉE as Azucena, and TAGLIAFICO as Ferrando. Mario was "superlative" as ever; and Grisi, it is said, seems every year endowed with new vitality.—Next followed *La Favorita*, with the same cast as last year: Grisi, Mario, Graziani as king Alphonso, Zelger as the old monk, Soldi, &c.—*Lucrezia Borgia* was given May 2nd with a splendid cast: Grisi, Lucrezia; Mario, Gennaro; Ronconi, Duke Alfonso; Mlle. Nantier-Didiée, Orsini. Mario was ill, however, and Sig. NERI BARALDI took his place. The *Times* describes him as "a young tenor, who has much to acquire before he can lay claim to the highest honors; but his voice, without being powerful, is flexible and of pleasant quality, his singing betrays evidence of a good method and natural capability, and his acting, while quiet and unobtrusive, is by no means devoid of sentiment."

The Thursday following was distinguished by the first appearance this season of Mme. Bosio. It was in the part of Gilda in *Rigoletto*, with Mario as the duke, Ronconi as the jester, Didiée as Madalena, and Tagliafico as Sparafucile.

Mme. Bosio's reception was enthusiastic. The winter at Petersburg had evidently had no depressing effect on one of the most delicious voices ever heard, while the singing of the fair artist was even more brilliant and finished than before.

Scarcely any character in which Mario appears exhibits him to greater advantage as an actor than the Duke in *Rigoletto*, while Signor Verdi would almost seem to have written this music especially to suit his voice. With what grace and inexpressible sentiment he gives the two airs, "Quest'è quella" and "La donna è mobile" everybody knows, and how impassioned and tender he is in the quartet, needs no telling now. "La donna è mobile" was encored with enthusiasm, and repeated with increased effect.

Bosio was to appear the following week in *La Traviata*, and the début of Mlle. VICTOIRE BALFE was fixed for the 21st, in *La Sonnambula*.

NEW PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY.—The following was the programme of the second concert, April 29th.

Overture—Coriolanus Beethoven
Aria: "Ah perfido" Beethoven
Concerto in C minor, Piano-forte Mozart
Aria: "Lascia ch'io pianga" Handel
Symphony in A Beethoven
Duo Concertante, Violin and Viola Mozart
Aria: "Va, dit elle," Mme. Rudersdorff Meyerbeer
Overture—Der Freischütz Weber
Conductor—Dr. Wylde.

PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY.—The season opened on the 20th of April, with an increased subscription list, and Prof. STERNDALE BENNETT as conductor, who, the London critics say, "has almost restored the Old Society to that equilibrium from which it had been disturbed by the eccentricities of Herr Wagner. This was the programme:

PART I.
Sinfonia in E flat, No. 8 Haydn
Aria: "Di militari onori," (Jessonda) Sig. Belletti Spohr
Concerto in D minor, Piano-forte, Miss Goddard, Mendelssohn
Recit. and Aria, "Du, mein Heil," Mme. Rudersdorff Weber
Overture (Euryanthe) Weber

PART II.
Sinfonia in D, No. 2 Beethoven
Concertino Violoncello, Sig. Piatti F. A. Kummer
Duetto (Agnese) Mme. Rudersdorff and Sig. Belletti Paer
Overture (Les Deux Journées) Cherubini

Here too is the programme of the second concert, Monday evening, May 4:

PART I.
Sinfonia in D, No. 2 Mozart
Aria, "O Salutaris hostia," Miss Lascelles Cherubini
Concerto Pathétique, Violin, M. Edouard Remenyi Ernst
Aria, "Selva opaca," Mme. Enderssohn (Guillaume Tell) Rossini
PART II.
Overture (Isles of Fingal) Mendelssohn
Sinfonia in C minor, No. 5 Beethoven
Part Songs: "Greeting," "May Bells," Mme. Enderssohn
and Miss Lascelles Mendelssohn
Concertino, Contrabasso, Sig. Bottesini Bottesini
Overture (Ruler of the Spirits) Weber

PARIS, MAY 14.—The musical event of the week has been the concerts which the pianist Rubinstein has given. He is a German, but brought up in St. Petersburg. Fifteen years ago, as a child, he gave a few concerts in Vienna, Germany, and was then considered a wonder. List at that time pronounced the most favorable prognostics over him.

His appearance has something very strange in it—I might say wild—a mixture of bashfulness and pride, a blunt modesty, and a rough dignity, which are not amiss. His face, without being handsome, gives the idea of a superior power. "Look!" said a Russian friend, "what a likeness to Beethoven! wait, and you will be convinced; his exterior is an index to his mind."

Mr. Rubinstein has given three concerts. The first in Erard's Saloon had the fortune to satisfy the judges; the second, in the saloon of Herz attracted the curiosity of their friends; the third, the last Saturday, was crowded. His reputation is made. Paris declares him without exception the greatest of living virtuosos!

On the evening when Rubinstein's last concert took place, Rossini gave a *soirée musicale*. The old maestro was kind enough to play a *sonata* of Haydn, and extracts from "Don Juan." Rossini has composed six new melodies, which he has dedicated to his wife, and which will shortly be published.

M. Meyerbeer is about to return to Paris from Berlin. This time the maestro is definitely to distribute the parts for the long-talked-of "Africaine" at the grand opera. We do not see how the composer will be in better position, however, to do this at present than he was last year, seeing that the want of a good tenor was the reason then alleged for the delay—a want that has certainly not been since removed, but as Arnal says, *au contraire*. Barrini, the Italian violinist, who may be said to divide Paganini's inheritance with Savori, has just passed through Paris en route to London. Barrini comes from Italy and Vienna, where he has had a brilliant winter campaign. He has been appointed *virtuoso di camera* to the Emperor Francis Joseph.—*Cor. of N. Y. Evening Post.*

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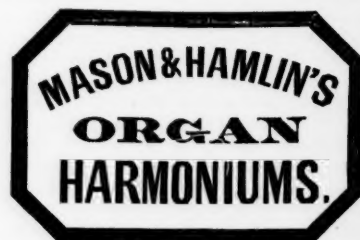
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